

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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UNCLAS DUBLIN 1284

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EI

SUBJECT: IRISH TO TEST LEGALITY OF FRENCH EMBARGOES ON LAMB IMPORTS

PASS AGRICULTURE FOR HUME AND L D & P DIV/FCA

FROM AG ATTACHE OFFICE

1. AGMIN CLINTON IS ASKING THE EC COMMISSION TO GIVE THEIR OPINION
ON THE LEGALITY OF THE FRENCH SLUICE-GATE SYSTEM WHEREBY LAMB IMPORTS,

IN PARTICULAR IRISH AND UK, ARE CHARGED VARIABLE DUTIES OR BANNED
ALTOGETHER AS FRENCH MARKET PRICES FALL.

2. THE IRISH FARMERS ASSOCIATION (IFA) HAD ALREADY COMMENCED LEGAL
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE, BUT ARE NOW WAITING
TO SEE THE OUTCOME OF GOI INTERVENTION.

3. THE ARBITRARY MANNER IN WHICH THE FRENCH CONTROL THEIR LAMB MARKET
HAS LONG BEEN A SORE POINT IN FRANCO-IRISH RELATIONS, BUT HAS
GROWN TO LARGE PROPORTIONS SINCE IRELAND JOINED THE EC.

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4. MEANWHILE, FRENCH EXPORT INTERESTS AND THE IFA HAVE MET, FOLLOWING IFA THREATS TO BOYCOTT SELECTED FRENCH EXPORTS TO IRELAND, NOTABLY AUTOMOBILES. MEETINGS ARE ALSO TAKING PLACE BETWEEN THE IFA AND ITS FRENCH COUNTERPARTS IN BRUSSELS.

5. A SOURCE IN THE IRISH LIVESTOCK AND MEAT BOARD SAID THAT FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS QUOTE "WORRIED" UNQUOTE BY THE DISSENTION. THIS SUGGESTS PRESSURE HAS BEEN BROUGHT BY FRENCH MANUFACTURING AND EXPORTING INTERESTS ON GOF. ALSO FRANCE WILL PRESUMABLY WANT TO AVOID UNNECESSARY DISAGREEMENTS WITH OTHER EC MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY WITH IRELAND WHICH IS A TRADITIONAL SUPPORTER OF FRENCH CAP POLICIES.

6. THE OUTCOME MAY BE FURTHER PRESSURE ON LARDINOIS TO PRODUCE A CAP FOR SHEEP. IFA REPRESENTATIVES IN BRUSSELS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY EC SOURCES THAT LARDINOIS WILL ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF A SHEEP CAP IN NEXT FEW DAYS. HOWEVER, THE IFA THINK THAT LARDINOIS IS "UNPREDICTABLE" AND THEY WILL "BELIEVE IT WHEN THEY SEE IT."

7. MEANWHILE, NEWSPAPER REPORTS SAY AGMIN CLINTON IS TO ASK AT NEXT WEEKS MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS FOR A FURTHER DEVALUATION OF THE IRISH GREEN POUND IN LINE WITH EXPECTED UK DEMANDS FOR DEVALUATION OF THEIR GREEN POUND, REPORTED TO BE IN ORDER OF 10 PERCENT. AGMIN OFFICIALS NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY THIS.

REND AHL

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